2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

his maternal uncle—generally it would be the mother's uterine brother—for a bull-calf with the markings of the new ox-name he has taken. Though he cannot demand it as a right, he may curse his uncle's herd so that the male calves die if he is refused his request. It seems that the customary way of making this request is for the nephew to make an incision on the ear of the calf he desires. A man may not bury his maternal uncle, and I believe that a mother's brother should not bury his sister's son. Were a man to bury his maternal uncle he would die of *keth nara*, a disease which is said to cause white patches on the skin. The same disease may attack a man who hears that his maternal uncle has been wounded or cut himself severely and does not visit him and place some of the blood on his foot. Should the nephew not hear of the uncle's wound and contract the disease, he visits him and gets him to rub soot from the bottom of a pot on the affected surfaces. A man and his maternal uncle may not tether their cattle together in the same kraal, though the cattle may graze together. If one of the uncle's beasts dies the nephew may not skin it, for were he to do so he would destroy the uncle's herd and people would say that 'he had spilt the cattle of his uncle to the ground'. An uncle may not give his sister's son a spear-shaft, for the gift might cause him serious injury. A man and his sister's son must not use the same sleeping-hide or sleep in the same hut. These rules, especially those which forbid a man tethering his cattle in his uncle's kraal, skinning his uncle's beasts, and sleeping in the same hut as his uncle, seem almost designed to keep the two apart, to prevent a youth identifying himself with his maternal kin instead of with his paternal kin.

The maternal uncle is the kinsman who most often blesses a lad in the Nuer way of blessing, by spitting on the head. Grandparents may sometimes do this, but other relatives rarely. If a man comes frequently to visit his sister and partakes of her hospitality and does not occasionally spit on her child's head, the child may get the disease I have mentioned above. It is also said that when a maternal uncle rises during the day from a nap in the ashes of the hearth and his sister's son rubs the ashes off his back he must then spit on the lad's head. But if the blessing of a maternal uncle is desired, his curse is believed to be among the worst, if not the worst, a Nuer can receive, for, unlike the father, a maternal uncle may curse a youth's cattle, as well as his crops

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
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The attitude of the kinsmen depends largely on the widow's behaviour. If she refuses to live with one of them but consents to remain in their village, as a member of their *gol* or homestead, and there bear children to her dead husband by a man who is not of their kin they cannot easily find fault with her, and even if she has not borne her husband two children they are unlikely to divorce her for the children she bears are not only legally of their kin but are born amidst them and reared by them.

A widow is always asked at the gathering of her husband's kinsmen at his mortuary ceremony, on "the day of evil" (*cang giekni*) when they purify the mourners and send the ghost away from them, whom she wishes to live with. I was told that if she refuses the sons and brothers of her dead husband they ask her *Cehe, guri bi wa lum dor kie bi lum cieng?* "O woman do you wish to become a concubine away from the village or to be a concubine at home?" A Nuer told me that on such an occasion *Cek me here wide yar be lar* "*Ghan gan ca be wa lum gwadh dodien, Me ca gat coada gur, ba lum golkun*", "A woman who is not a fool will say, 'I will not seek a lover in another place. Though I do not want a son of my husband I will take a lover in your home'". She will then cohabit with a member of her husband's village, maybe one of his more distant male kinsmen, maybe a villager of a different clan. Everyone is satisfied with this arrangement, for she still remains a member of their *gol* and her lover is a member of their village and he not only begets children for them but also becomes the protector and bread-winner of the surviving members of their dead kinsman's family. Sometimes the lover is not a member of the dead man's village but is a man of a neighbouring village who visits the widow there from time to time to cohabit with her and assist her in horticultural labour.

Widows who decide to leave the homes of their dead husbands often return to their own people and take lovers in the villages of their brothers. Thus, as will be seen later in the charts and diagrams referring to the village of Nyueny, we often find matrilocal and patrilocal residence side by side owing to the return of widows, bringing their children with them, to the homes of their kinsmen. It thus often happens that children are brought up among their maternal relatives.

Often widows neither remain in the homes of their dead husbands nor return to their kinsmen, but go to live with lovers, sometimes in different districts and even in different tribal areas. If their children by their husbands are small they may take them with them so that during childhood they are members of the households of the lovers of their mothers. These men act as foster-fathers to the children.

It is impossible to say in advance which course a widow will pursue. Much depends on the character and social position of the husband's kinsmen and upon the strength of kinship sentiment among them. If there are full brothers of the dead man they may consider it their duty as well as their privilege to retain the services of "their wife", especially if she is young and they are unmarried. If there are only half-brothers of the dead man and still more if there are no brothers at all but only cousins, they have less control over the widow and less sense of obligation to the

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
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592 death.) Yang ♂ cohabits with Nyabuk ♀—Riaagh ♂ who lives in his homestead. She is a widow of Thiac ♂—Jok ♂, of the Diany section. By her husband she bore Nyalani ♀ and by Yang ♂ she bore Nyawura ♀ who was killed by lightning and is honoured by a ceremonial post in Yang's homestead, Jany ♂, Nyabiel ♀, Nyangir ♀, and two other children who died. Yang ♂ is betrothed to a girl but she has not yet borne him a child and still lives with her parents.

[764]

592 588 *Homestead No. XX.* Dhoal ♂—Cuc ♂ (a Dinka who was given Nuer kinship). He had relations with Gol ♀—Gek ♂, an unmarried girl, who bore him Rwac ♂. The mother is dead and the boy has been legitimatized by payment of a fee. He has recently been initiated in Dhoal's homestead. Dhoal ♂ now cohabits with Nyabiem ♀—Kan ♂, a widow of a man of the Jwal clan. She lives in Dhoal's homestead. After her husband's death Nyabiem cohabited with one of his kinsmen, Gany ♂—Bul ♂ to whom she bore Nyagac ♀, at present living with her mother. She came to live with Dhoal ♂ after separating from Gany and bore him Nyabilieu ♀ and another daughter who is still an infant. Dhoal ♂ also cohabits with Nyadhiac ♀ who lives in an adjacent homestead, No. XXIV, and has begotten several children by her; and with a young woman of the Dok tribe who has run away from her husband in Dok country and taken up her residence in Dhoal's home. She has not borne him any children but is said to be an excellent cook. As her husband's cattle have not been returned she is living in adultery with Dhoal but since she refuses to live with her husband and since she is a member of a distant tribe she counts as equivalent to a widow-concubine and is not counted as an unmarried concubine.

592 588 593 *Homestead No. XXI.* Nyadang ♀—Luk ♂ (of the Jikul clan). She is a widow of Dit ♂—Bicuk ♂ of the Keunyang section. Her only living child by her husband is Nyakwoli ♀. Two are dead. After her husband's death she cohabited with Baranyai ♂ of Homestead No. III. By him she bore a son, Galuak ♂, who lives with his genitor, twins who died, and another son, Bol ♂, who was drowned when crossing a river during flight from a Government punitive expedition. Owing to these deaths Nyadang's genealogy was more closely enquired into and it was discovered that she was distantly related to Baranyai. They thereupon ceased to cohabit and Nyadang took Nhial ♂—Tweth ♂, of Homestead No. XXIII, as a lover. She bore him Nyabilieu ♀ but left him because he used to beat her and she now cohabits with Mokwac of Homestead No. XVI. She has not borne him any children but "cooks for him". Nyadang's unmarried brother, Wal ♂—Luk ♂, lives in this homestead.

592 588 *Homestead No. XXII.* Nyagany ♀. She is barren. She was divorced by her husband, Deng ♂, a Lek tribesman, and then cohabited first with Mok ♂—Jang ♂, another Lek tribesman, then with a Rengyan tribesman, and at present with Mabil ♂—Wel ♂ of the village of Nyang.

592 595 *Homestead No. XXIII.* Nhial ♂—Tweth ♂ (brother of Nyadut ♀ of Homestead No. XVIII). He is Bor tribesman. He has two wives: Nyabath ♀—Lam ♂, a Jikany woman of the Gai section, by whom he has a small son; and Nyantual ♀—Deng ♂, a Jikany woman of the Gom

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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755 They chant, they spit and blow upon the person. A sheep or an ox may be sacrificed. If the disease is persistent, more sacrifices are offered, more chanting is done. If successful in removing the cause of the disease, or even if the people are satisfied with what he has done, the medicine man usually receives a gift of a sheep or an ox for his services. But if the patient dies while under treatment the price paid is usually returned. The medicine men, or women, as the case may be, or those who are supposed to have a god in them, reap a good harvest in sheep and cattle from those who seek their services for relief from disease.

Medicine men usually wear the hair long and may wear a beard.

757 One common practice that is often resorted to for curative effect is bleeding. In case of a swelling or a bruise or muscular pain, many small cuts are made at the site of the pain in order to let the blood out and presumably the pain with it.

In cases of severe colds the chest is often cut in this way. When patients so treated go to the clinic for medical aid, it is often impossible to rub the chest with oils or apply poultices on account of the effect of such medicines on these little raw cuts.

[736] 164 Scorpions and snakes abound in Nuerland, and cause a great deal of suffering, but few die of snakebite.

The Nuer do not have much malaria. Occasionally one may see a few cases among them.

DEATH AND BURIAL

888 764 The Nuer are kind to their aged and usually respect their opinions, but death in Nuerland and the details of burial are gruesome. The climate of course necessitates quick burial, so as soon as life is extinct preparations must be made.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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A description is given in Chapter VII of the way in 000
which the body of a person who has been killed by lightning is disposed of.

For those who die of other causes a grave is dug. 764
Relatives, usually the older ones, seem to consider it their right and privilege to dig the grave and bury the body. A twin does not help to dig a grave. The oldest child will break the ground at the site of the grave, but will do no digging if a parent is to be buried.

The work of digging the grave may last for several hours, for the ground is hard and the hoes used to dig with are quite inadequate. Sometimes relatives of the deceased, if near the mission, will borrow spades and hoes, and frequently welcome the assistance of a missionary in using them. If in a distant village they would simply follow Nuer customs as they are.

The grave may not be quite long enough, but the body is made to fit in. It is laid on the right side, so that the spirit may always walk aright and bring good to those left behind.

The body is stripped of all ornament and the head is shaved. To neglect this is to show disregard for the dead. Pieces of animal skin are placed under the right hip and ear and over the other hip and ear so as to protect them from the clods of earth.

Those who fill the grave sit with their backs to it, so that they may not see the earth fall upon the body of their dear one. Anybody who has once seen the Nuer burial can well understand why they should not want to see into the grave—it is a gruesome sight. After the burial those who have dug the grave bathe, and also wash the implements used for digging.

Only the family come to the burial. It is permissible to ask a few others, but it is seldom done.

764 The same day the stalk of the wild rice is swished all over the house and premises where the body lay after death, and is then put on the grave. The grave may be inside the house, or close to it outside. In the latter case it is plastered over with mud, and thorny branches are laid on it, or a cane-stalk fence is built round it, as the hungry hyena is ever near.

THE CLOSE OF THE MOURNING

765 After the burial the people eat little food for several days. Then some near friend comes and tells them that we all must die and urges them to cheer up.

The period of mourning varies. It may be from five to six months for a man and probably two months or more for a woman or child. A longer period of mourning is customary for a chief or his family.

When in mourning the hair is shaved off and it is not again cut or bleached until the period of mourning is over. No ornaments are worn. A rope is worn round the waist.

Word is sent to all the relatives that the period of mourning is to be finished upon a certain day. They come, sometimes from a long distance. The women pound dura and bring water.

A good friend of the family is master of the ceremony. This man brings lumps of earth to make a new fireplace. He makes a fire. He puts an earthen pot (a new one if possible) over the fire and puts dura mush on to cook. The women stir it.

The friend takes a spear in his left hand and a piece of grass in his right and walks up and down between the people and the food. He beseeches the god that this sorrow may pass. If the deceased is a woman or child, no spear is carried.

561 881 initiation. He is a *wut*, a man, whereas before he was one of the *dhòli* (boys). He is now treated by his elders as a man and he has close contacts with the cattle; he herds them, has his own ox and takes an ox name. He goes to dances and indulges in love-making and flirting as the preliminaries to marriage.

561 764 582 Certain ritual observances are practised between members of the same age set, and between members of different sets: sets are segregated at sacrificial feasts; members of a set cannot bury an age mate or participate in the mortuary ceremonies; a man may not marry or have sexual relations with the daughter of an age mate, for he is as a father to her; a man should not marry a daughter of one of his father's age mates unless his or her father is dead, because the strained relations between the two fathers-in-law would be incompatible with the free and easy relations of equality which should exist between age mates.

561 Members of a junior set are expected to show respect to members of senior sets. Since every Nuer has an age relationship to every other Nuer, the attitudes and types of behaviour between two men are determined in advance of meeting, unless there is any particularly strong and overruling tie of kinship.

561 608 Relations between sets are defined in ordinary kinship terms. Members of a father's age set are fathers, their wives are mothers; members of one's own age set are brothers, their wives are sisters, and so forth. When speaking of a set immediately senior to his own, but not his father's, a man will call the men fathers-in-law and the women mothers-in-law, because he is usually courting the daughters of this age set in preparation for marriage.

MARRIAGE

582 Marriage is not permitted between clansfolk, close cognates, close kinsfolk by adoption, close affines or persons who stand to one another as father and daughter in the age-set system. If it is uncertain whether the genealogical distance between a couple is wide enough to permit marriage, a sacrifice (generally a beast) will be offered to cut the bonds of kinship if any exist.(1)

There are several types of marriage among the Nuer.

588 1. *Ghost Marriage.* If a man dies before he has married or if his wife does not bear him male children, one of his close kinsmen has the obligation of marrying a wife to his name, for it is held that no initiated male should be allowed to lie in his grave unremembered in his children. A vicarious marriage is contracted, and the vicarious husband acts as though he were the true husband in the marriage ritual. Evans-Pritchard states that "in physiological and in domestic roles he is husband, in all but the legal sense..... The legal husband is the ghost in whose name the bride cattle are paid and the marriage ritual performed."(2) The ghost family is a legal family and such families are almost as numerous as simple

(1) Evans-Pritchard, "Nuer rules of exogamy and incest", 1949, p.90.
(2) Evans-Pritchard, "Some aspects of marriage and the family among the Nuer", 1936, pp.350-9.

15: Butt E-4 (No date) 1952 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

582 marriage ceremony with partners selected for the purpose, and, in the ceremony, the role of the sexes is reversed.(1)

BURIAL

•764 The grave is dug and the corpse buried as quickly as possible and without ceremony. Young people and age-mates of the deceased do not participate. The grave site is at the left-hand side of a man's hut. All ornaments are removed and the body is buried in a flexed position, one arm being placed under the head and the other over it. The body lies on the right side facing west. Graves are not long remembered, and are not places for ritual. When a leopard-skin chief or a *wut ghok* dies he is buried on a platform and covered with skins.

A few days after death, the *gwan buthni*, the ritual expert of the lineage, makes a sacrifice and cleanses the people of the homestead. The ghost *(jook)* is told not to trouble the living. Some believe that spirits live in the sky, others that they continue to live under the earth the same kind of life as they lived when alive.(2)

765 Relatives mourn until the mortuary ceremony which is held several months after death. The purpose of this ceremony, the *mocene cuol cuol moc*, is to prevent misfortune which might befall the relatives on account of the death and to cut off the dead from the living.

THE BURUN

000 GENERAL

The Burun inhabit the regions between the White and Blue Niles in the province of Dar Fung. The country is a flat plain, with rocky hills emerging from it. These jebels are in some cases of considerable size and, wherever there is water in or near them, they have settlements on them. The populations of the hills have been considerably affected by foreign influence over a long period of time and, as a consequence, are very mixed. The Burun-speaking peoples may be divided into two groups:

The Northern Burun, comprising the settlements on hills Maiak, Surkum, Jerok, Mafwa, Kurmuk, Kudul, Fagreig, Abuldugu, Mughaja, and Tullok;

The Southern Burun, comprising the Meban of the southern plains, the dwellers on hills Ulu and Gerwai and the Jumjum on hills Tunya, Terta, Wadega and along Khor Jukjum.

The following account is a brief summary of the information available on the social organisation, cultural features and ritual beliefs and practices of the Burun-speaking people. Each hill community is treated separately for, according to the authorities, each is entirely independent of the rest. Most of the information available is contained in Evans-Pritchard's article in S.N.R., 1932, Vol.XV, Pt.I.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Sudan Journal*, 1936, Vol.III, No.3, p.233.
(2) Evans-Pritchard, *African Affairs*, 1949, Vol.48, p.57.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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CHAPTER VI

SOUL AND GHOST

I

775 Religion is the reciprocal relation between God and man. Our study of Nuer religion is therefore a study not only of this people's conception of *kwoth*, God, but also of their conception of *ran*, man, and of the relation between the two conceptions. They stand to each other as opposites, symbolized in the opposites of sky and earth; and this is one of the salient contrasts of Nuer thought. I have already discussed the ideas they have about God, and I now propose to discuss some of their ideas about man. We can perhaps best start this discussion by considering what happens at death when man disintegrates into his three component parts, *ring*, flesh, *yiegh*, breath or life, and *tie*, intellect or soul.

764 Nuer say that a man who does not fear death summons his family and closest kin to his death-bed, but all who are not grave-diggers leave his homestead immediately he is dead, and the grave is dug and the corpse buried as quickly as possible and without ceremony. Usually only two or three people dig the grave and these are senior kinsmen, or sometimes kinswomen. A member of a man's age-set must not dig his grave, and all children and young people keep away from the homestead, even those nearest to the dead, such as his sons and younger brothers, however grieved they may be at their loss. They may weep but they do [761] not attend the burial, for death is an evil thing and only those who must get rid of the corpse should go near the grave. Men do not wail, and if women wail it is not for long, just a little as soon as the person has died and again shortly before he is buried to let the neighbours know of the death and burial. I have never witnessed a burial and it was with difficulty I obtained a description of what happens. Death is a subject Nuer do not care to speak about.

The shaft is dug near the left-hand side (as one faces it) of the dead man's hut or, if he dies in camp, his windscreen. This is the *kwi giakni*, the side of evil. The grave is dug to the depth of a

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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man's chest as he stands in it. Nuer say that were a man to be buried in a shallow grave and his corpse to be scratched up by hyenas he would haunt those responsible. The head of the corpse is shaved and all ornaments are removed from the body before burial. A man goes to the grave as naked as he was born. A woman is buried in her loin skin, closely drawn between the legs. The legs of both sexes are flexed and one arm is placed under the head and the other over it as the corpse lies on its right side on a strip of ox-hide. Another strip of ox-hide is placed over it and pieces are also placed over the ears to prevent earth entering them. I believe that in western Nuerland a man is buried facing east and a woman facing west, but in eastern Nuerland both sexes are buried facing west. Nuer have told me that this is because the eastern Nuer came orginally from the west and that it was in western Nuerland that their ancestors were created; but, as will be seen, they also associate the passage from birth to death with the movement of the sun across the sky. The grave-diggers heap the earth they dig around the edge of the shaft, five heaps for a man and four for a woman. When filling the shaft they sit or stand with their backs to it and scoop the earth back with their hands, at first slowly and then quickly, from each heap in turn. When the earth is above the level of the ground they beat it down. The small hump which is left is stamped down a few days later so that there is then no sign of the grave, unless it is an old woman's grave, when her pipe or neckrest or cooking-pot may be placed on it. Graves are not places of cult and are not long remembered. I have never heard a man speak of the grave of an ancestor or kinsman. The dead man's hut continues to be occupied after the women have beaten it inside and outside with wild rice. Persons killed by lightning, twins, and holders of certain ritual offices have special modes of burial (pp. 54–55 and 129–30).

When the burial is completed the master of ceremonies of the dead man's family dips a handful of wild rice in water and asperses the grave-diggers with it. They then go to the nearest stream to wash themselves. They may not drink water before they have been aspersed and have washed lest they die of the consequences (*nueer*). A few days later the master of ceremonies sprinkles all the people of the homestead and close kin who live nearby in the same manner and sacrifices an animal to God, an ox if the dead man had a large herd, otherwise one of the flock,

764 in front of the dead man's hut. He also addresses the ghost and
782 tells him that he has been taken away and must turn his face to the ground and not trouble the living: 'friend, this (beast) is yours (for you). Now turn yourself to the ghosts. Turn yourself away from us. Death was not made by us in old times, it was made by God, friend. Do not trouble your people with bad dreams but regard us favourably. God has not entirely destroyed you, for there are those who come after you; you have children left behind you.' If the family have no animal to sacrifice the master of ceremonies sacrifices by cutting in two a wild cucumber. 'The half of the living, the half of the children, the right half, remains outside, being placed in the thatch of the hut. The half of the dead man is thrown into the bush.' With it is thrown out of the village the contagion of death. They say of this sacrifice '*ba kier piny ka del*', '(the dead man) is expiated in the earth with a goat', and that the badness goes into the earth with the blood and the chyme.

765 Members of the family mourn till the mortuary ceremony has been held some months after death. They shave their heads after the burial but then they do not shave them again, neither do they treat the hair with ashes nor depilate their bodies, till the period of mourning is ended. They also remove all ornaments, and the closest relatives wear a *dep liath*, a mourning cord of grass, around their waists and necks. There are no prescribed food and sex abstentions during the period of mourning though I was told that close kin may abstain from sexual relations for a few days after death 'because they are sad and thinking of their dead friend'. Less closely related persons and the wives of kin show their respect by leaving their hair untended but for a shorter time, perhaps only a month or so. When people are in mourning they do not attend dances. People do not mourn for a small child, for
[858] 'a small child is not a person (*ran*). When he tethers the cattle and herds the goats he is a person. When he cleans the byres and spreads the dung out to dry and collects it and carries it to the fires he is a person.' A man will not say that he has a son till the
[766] child is about six years of age. A small child is buried by old women and without sacrifice.

765 Four to six months after burial the mortuary ceremony is held.
775 It is known as *wocene cuol* or *cuol woc* because its purpose is to wipe out (*woc*) the debt (*cuol*) which Nuer feel to be due on account of the death. They seem to feel that there is some mis-

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

fortune hanging over them and that the death may be only part of it. It is necessary to clear off the whole debt before any further evil comes to them. Otherwise people may cut their feet when fishing, pierce their feet when hunting, cut themselves with spears when dancing, or indeed meet with almost any misfortune, even death. Nuer also feel that if the dead is not appeased by this ceremony he may return in anger to fetch the living, especially his wives and children, and the cattle.

I have only once witnessed this ceremony, rather early in my study of the Nuer, and I have supplemented my account of what I then saw with statements made to me later. The ceremony was held at Dini in the Lou tribal area for the ghost of an important old man called Lam. When I arrived at the dead man's village towards evening the people had just sacrificed an ox outside his kraal. This sacrifice had been for Tutthiang, Lam's father, for it was known that Lam had intended before he died to sacrifice this animal in his father's honour. Next morning, before sunrise, an ox and a cow and its bull-calf were speared at their tethering-pegs in Lam's kraal. People watched to see how they fell; because if a sacrificed animal falls over cleanly on its side, especially if it falls on its right side, it is a good omen and shows that the ghost is content, whereas if it falls on its head or totters about before falling it is a bad omen. It is regarded as important that a cow still giving milk should be sacrificed for the ghost of an old man who had a position in his community lest he should feel that sufficient sacrifice had not been made. To kill a cow in milk is the greatest sacrifice a Nuer can make. An animal must be sacrificed for each wife of the dead by one of her sons or by some kinsman on behalf of her hut. If the ceremony is for a young unmarried man his favourite ox should be sacrificed. A cow should be sacrificed for a senior woman if the herd is large, and a male calf for a young woman. However, there are no hard and fast rules about the matter. The people of the home should sacrifice what they can afford, cattle if possible, but a goat or sheep if they cannot obtain at least a male calf, which is unlikely, because a man can generally borrow one from a neighbour.

At Dini after the cattle had been killed they were skinned and the meat apportioned to the various categories of kin. It is an absolute rule, however, that no member of the ghost's age-set may partake of the meat of animals sacrificed at his mortuary

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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in the home of his parents-in-law they avoid offering him milk from the cattle he has paid them. Further, if there is a divorce and the bridewealth cattle are returned to the husband's people they sacrifice a goat before they drink of their milk.

Nuer 'respect with regard to food' unrelated people (*nei ti gwagh*) of the opposite sex, especially if they are unmarried and possible sweethearts. They will not eat with them or even see them, or be seen by them, eating and drinking, and food must not be mentioned when they are both present. The sexes, unless they are kin, avoid each other in the matter of food. Nuer feel so strongly about this avoidance that I was obliged to observe it strictly myself.

Another situation in reference to which one hears the word *thek* is homicide. I discuss it in greater detail in Chapter XII. A man who slays another respects water—he may not drink—until a priest has made sacrifice and cut his right arm. Then until the blood-feud is closed by payment of cattle and by sacrifices the kin of the slayer and the kin of the slain may not eat or drink from vessels from which the other has eaten or drunk. They respect the vessels and the food and water of the other party. Even to use the same vessels at the home of a third party who is in no way connected with the feud may entail the most serious consequences. A third party may cause death to one side or the other by eating or drinking with both.

Another use of the word *thek*, which, as always, contains the idea of avoidance, is in reference to burial and to mortuary sacrifices. Those who bury a corpse respect water—they may not drink—until they have been cleansed. Members of a dead man's age-set abstain from the meat of the cattle sacrificed at the ceremony held to close the period of mourning for him. They are said to respect the meat. It has been noted earlier (p. 55) that people may not eat or drink in the homes of close kin of a person struck by lightning before they have sacrificed. Another use is in connexion with the eldest child of a marriage. He respects the spoons of his parents and the sleeping-hide of his mother. He is careful not to eat with the first or sit on the second. Were he to do so he might cause the mother to be barren and injure the father, himself, and the cattle. A man is also said to respect his as yet unconceived children by abstaining from congress with his wife when she is menstruating[1]

[1] He is not said to *thek*, respect, his wife when she is menstruating. He